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House of Representatives

FILNER WILL KEEP FIGHTING FOR AN ENVIRONMENTALLY- FRIENDLY ENERGY POLICY!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. FILNER. Madam Chairman, this legislation takes our nation in the wrong direction and fails to meet our energy needs. This is a missed opportunity. We could have boosted our nation's commitment to renewable and efficient energy, thereby curbing our reliance on foreign oil, creating 21st century jobs, protecting the environment and providing affordable and reliable energy for America's families. We could have taken on the oil companies that are gouging all our constituents at the gas pumps. We could have fought for more hybrid vehicles, higher fuel economy standards and other 21st century technologies.

But, instead, the Republican energy bill doles out favors to the oil, gas and coal companies, keeping our nation stuck in the 20th century. This bill allows the oil companies to rip up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This bill protects companies that have polluted our water with MTBE. We now know that GOP means gas, oil and petroleum!

The Rules Committee blocked two amendments I would have offered to this bill. The first would have simply extended the tax credit for geothermal energy, giving energy companies the time they need to build geothermal facilities and actually use the incentive this Congress already approved. My amendment would have promoted the development of geothermal energy in Imperial Valley, California, and around the nation, creating good jobs and a source of clean, domestically-produced, environmentally friendly, reliable energy. Yet the Republicans on the Rules Committee shot down this common sense amendment, preventing us from even taking a vote on it.

They also blocked my amendment to address another very serious issue we are facing in Imperial Valley—air pollution from power plants across the border in Mexico. In the 21st century, U.S. companies should not be able to skirt their environmental obligations by moving a few miles across the border! My amendment would

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have simply required power plants in the border region to meet our environmental standards if they wish to transmit electricity into the United States. In exchange for transmission permits from the Department of Energy, power plants in Mexicali, Mexico would have been forced to pay for projects in Imperial Valley to off-set the air pollution they are sending across the border into our communities. With the highest child asthma rate in California, Imperial County certainly needs the help, but the Republicans on the Rules

Committee once again turned their backs on us.

We will continue fighting for a better approach to energy in this Nation. We will fight for an investigation of the oil companies to determine if any wrongdoing has contributed to the sky-high gas prices. We will fight for a commitment to geothermal energy and other clean and renewable energy sources. And we will continue fighting for an energy policy that reduces pollution in the border region and around the country.